

Suggested Remarks
Jon D. Lindborg
USAID Mission Director
IBM eMentor Scholarship Program Ceremony
Marco Polo Hotel, Davao City
January 25, 2006 at 09:45 A.M.

Dr. Ricardo de Leon, Mindanao State University
System President;
Dr. Udtog Kawit, DepEd Regional Secretary and
Superintendent for Maguindanao;
Superintendents of the different DepEd
Provincial and City Offices;
Mr. Joaquin E. Quintos IV, General Manager,
IBM Philippines;
Andrea Escalona, Country Marketing Manager,
IBM Philippines;
Dr. Tata Medado, Gen. Manager, EduQuest, Inc.;
Teachers from the ARMM;
Colleagues from USAID; and the GEM Program
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Assalamu Alaikum, Mabuhay, and Good morning to
all of you.

It is a great pleasure to be here this morning,
representing the Government of the United
States, and to share your enthusiasm in marking
the completion of training for the first group

of teachers participating in the "**IBM eMentor Scholarship Program**" implemented in cooperation with USAID's Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program.

IBM is one of the most widely respected companies in the United States and throughout the world, and its leadership in the field of information technology has continued for decades. Joining USAID resources with those of this cutting edge corporation makes perfect sense. It illustrates, I believe, the many benefits that can flow from such public/private partnerships.

For IBM, we understand the "eMentor Program" is the first initiative of its kind in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Though the program had already achieved success in other areas of the Philippines, implementing it in the ARMM—where it is also needed—was a challenge. That is because schools in this region lacked both computers and reliable

connections to the internet. This challenge is now being met.

The eMentor program can be implemented now because, to date, USAID's CLIC Program has equipped 250 selected schools in the region with the computers and internet technology on which IBM's "Mentor Program" relies. By the end of September 2006, CLIC will have equipped a total of 400 schools. I am confident that the eMentor program can be expanded over the next several months, since the needed IT base will be in place. USAID is very pleased that we have been able to help.

The eMentor Program will increase the value of the computers and internet connections by equipping teachers with the skills to plan and develop instructional materials and lesson content around the computers and the internet. Teachers will learn, for example, to use the internet to acquire rich and accurate materials produced throughout the world, and to integrate those materials into their lessons. As has

happened with the teachers with us today, they will learn to use the computers and the internet as vital educational tools.

Each of the parties to this collaboration gains from working with the other. IBM gains the opportunity to implement its program in a region that will benefit greatly from it, thereby enhancing its presence in the area and hopefully, opening up marketing opportunities. USAID gains from the enhanced utilization of the resources which it has provided. Teachers gain valuable skills and knowledge. Of course, for students, this collaboration dramatically increases the quality and value of their educational experience.

Historically, many factors have hindered Mindanao's development, and pressing problems still remain to be addressed. However, looking beyond these temporary limitations, Mindanao, clearly, has marvelous resources. The most important of these are its hopeful and bright young people. These young people, because of

the resources now available to them, can with well-trained and competent teachers, expect to realize more of their intellectual and economic potential. These young people will be able to contribute to the improvement of the region's future in the global economy.

Today's ceremony represents a significant step towards expanding the utilization and practical application of internet-connected computers in the computer labs managed by the 30 teacher-mentors we are honoring today. This relationship between IBM and USAID is a sensible collaboration. It is my hope that it will lead to additional, similar efforts and will serve as a model for future collaboration between the US Government and other companies in the IT industry.

Mr. Quintos, thanks to you and your colleagues at IBM for having shared your resources, skills, and expertise, so willingly. By working with USAID through our GEM program to implement this activity, you have made a lasting contribution

to and an invaluable investment in the lives of the young people of Mindanao; an investment that will enhance Mindanao's development and will brighten the future of its young people.

Thank you and good day.